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UNCLAS DUSHANBE 002008

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EUR/CACEN, SA

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SUBJECT: TAJIKISTAN CADA DIRECTOR REMAINS IN COUNTRY FOR NOW

1. (SBU) EmbOffs met with David Lovett and Paul Linge, the outgoing and present Country Directors of the Central Asian Development Agency, a non-denominational Christian-supported aid NGO December 9. Lovett's visa expired in November and, after thirteen years in Tajikistan, the government denied his visa renewal application. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Consular Department did not explain why his visa was denied. Concerned over being deported, he requested U.S. Embassy assistance in resolving the matter.

2. (SBU) PolOff met with Ismatullo Nasredinov, Head of the Department of European and American Countries in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, regarding Lovett's visa status. Nasredinov indicated the decision not to renew Lovett's visa was solely because of problems with Lovett's personal application. The Ministry has received assistance from CADA in the past and understands the implications of deporting a high-profile person such as Lovett. Nasredinov also explained that according to Tajik law, a court order is needed to deport someone. A court order requires a long judicial process and Lovett is not presently in danger of being deported. Nasredinov attempted to contact the Consular Department, however, no one has been able to authoritatively speak on this case.

3. (SBU) Post will send a diplomatic note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requesting clarification on why the Consular Department denied Lovett's visa renewal and reminding the Ministry of Lovett's thirteen years of service to Tajikistan and CADA's contributions to Tajikistan.

4. (SBU) COMMENT: The Consular Department's refusal to give a straight answer leads one to believe it is not simply a technical matter. Lovett's denial is another action along the lines of recent governmental measures restricting NGO activities and preventing NGO registration. However, it should be noted CADA and Lovett have also encountered problems with various government agencies in the past and this pressure could be because of some personal grievance against Lovett and CADA. END COMMENT.  
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